

living in the light of tomorrow

Libby Maskrey learnt more than she could imagine

In the midst of stressful exams and hectic ward rounds, it is easy to forget where we are heading. Over 400 medical students from around the UK (and abroad) arrived in Derbyshire for the annual national student conference from 13-15th February. We were there to learn about living in the light of tomorrow.

Reading from Revelation, Steve Brady (Principal of Moorlands Bible College) outlined God's plan to renew and restore creation. In his first Bible address (Revelation 1:9-20), he described how the apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos by the Romans for his faith. Jesus reassured him in this difficult time, 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!'¹

We were reminded of Jesus' character and authority. His beauty, humility and mercy should shape our response to his majesty. Jesus' eyes are 'like blazing fire';² he sees us as we truly are so he cannot be disillusioned with us. We can be comforted that our destiny is in the safest hands, because

we belong to a personal and loving God.

In Brady's second Bible address, he focused on the 'Battle of the Ages'. The imagery of Revelation 12-14 illustrates the battle (between good and evil) that began at the Fall, still being played out in heaven and on earth. Living between the crucifixion and Jesus' second coming, we will encounter spiritual battles at medical school, because we are made in God's image. The devil wishes to destroy that image, dehumanising us, but we can overcome him 'by the blood of the Lamb'.³

Brady's third Bible address (Revelation 21-22) looked ahead to the new creation. There will be continuity and change. It will be a community providing security, full of purity, illuminated by God. We can look forward to a place where the tree of life will provide true healing for all the nations; our God will make everything new!

tackling diverse issues

It was difficult to choose between the exciting seminars ranging from church history to

drug addiction. Having just completed an obstetrics and gynaecology placement, I found Tamie Downes' seminar on abortion particularly useful. She explained the current methods of abortion, and the relevant laws. In groups, we examined what the Bible says about when human life begins and how its value is derived from God. The discussion, about our duties as healthcare workers, convinced me of the need to ensure that patients make an informed choice.

What about the spiritual aspect to health? Is there ever a need to explore this during history-taking to determine the cause of illness? In the psychiatry seminar, we looked at what the Bible says about how mental disorders present, and the issue of demonisation.

Richard Dawkins certainly does not believe in demons. David Robertson (church minister and university chaplain in Dundee) led an interesting discussion about Dawkins' book *The God Delusion*. We questioned: why atheism has become the new religion, whether faith is reasonable and compatible with science, as well as how we can sensitively challenge these issues.

having a good time!

The weekend was packed, not only with serious talks, but lots of fun too! The student conference committee (SCC) stayed up all night until Saturday 6am, folding sheets of coloured paper... so every woman woke up on Valentine's Day to find an origami flower outside her room, with an inscription reminding them of God's love, 'Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens'.⁴

Those with energy to burn had Saturday afternoon to play badminton and football, or walk in the picturesque grounds, while others browsed bargains in the bookshop. The evening entertainment options included: the University Challenge quiz, a lively Ceilidh, a *Bladerunner* film showing and discussion, the praise concert, or just relaxing with friends from review groups (where we discussed the main talks).

Some of us got to meet the international students who arrived after their London preconference. Many of them overcame great hurdles, by God's grace, to attend. We also heard about God's work in UK medical schools in the morning praise and prayer sessions, and during the annual general meeting.



totally worthwhile!

I arrived at conference tired, unmotivated and shivering from the cold. I left having learnt more than I thought possible about the majesty of God, the ongoing spiritual battle in our personal lives and the medical world, as well as our hope in the new creation! I was encouraged to see so many students developing knowledge and friendships that will help their faith throughout their medical careers. This time next year, why don't you look up from your textbooks to see where on earth you are heading?

Sensitivity is certainly needed when we talk about sex. How you see its function and meaning depends on your worldview - whether you follow in the footsteps of philosophers and ethicists (past and present) or God's eternal Word. 'Sex and the Maker's Instructions' was the

title of CMF Chairman Trevor Stammers' conference address. He challenged us to consider the implications of biblical teaching for our own lives, and how to deal with the consequences of sex in society. Crucially, God's love is manifested most clearly in the cross - not in erotic love.

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REFERENCES

1. Revelation 1:17b-18a
2. Revelation 1:14b
3. Revelation 12:11
4. Song of Songs 2:2